

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT TRUMAN

TO GENERAL DONOVAN

20 September 1945

The letter belongs in this collection of documents because of its reference in the third paragraph to "the development of a coordinated system of foreign intelligence within the permanent framework of the Government." If it were indicative of nothing else this statement would show that the idea of having an American peace-time, centralized intelligence service had gained sufficient acceptability to permit of public mention without danger of again exciting cries of "Gestapo."

The letter is also interesting because of its clear indication of the President's desire to preserve the assets of OSS for use in peace-time intelligence work. Somewhat similar phraseology was used in the directive transferring the intelligence procurement branches of OSS to the War Department, and it was echoed in the specific directives issued by Secretary Patterson and Assistant Secretary McCloy to General Magruder, who had been asked by them to take over direction of what was then entitled "The Strategic Services Unit" of the War Department.

MORI/CDF Pages 1 & 16

THE DONOVAN PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AUTHORITY

The memorandum from General Donovan to President Roosevelt and the draft directive attached to it are really of historic importance. A limited number of copies was made and these were sent to leading cabinet members for comment as well as to the JCS. The JCS published the two papers as JCS 1181 which was given additional but still very limited ~~wide~~ distribution. Somehow a copy of JCS 1181 reached the press and was published, particularly in the Chicago Tribune and the Washington Times-Herald, with loud and startled cries of "Gettapo." These original articles found a wide echo in the press and radio of the world.

General Donovan felt that the leak had been intentional on the part of someone who wished to discredit the plan, and who hoped that the widespread publicity would force it into oblivion. If this was the case the intent was nearly successful. But when the leak was carefully investigated by the JSC it was found to be due to no fault on the part of either OSS, the War Department or the Navy Department.

The publicity took place early in February 1945, a date to be compared with that of the document itself. Shortly afterward the succeeding paper in this collection, JIC 239/5, was also given the same sort of publicity after it had been presented to the JCS by the JSSC (Joint Strategic Survey Committee). The publicizing of this document removed suspicion from the Donovan Plan, which thereafter was once more accepted at its face value.

The one point in the draft which finally stood out as truly controversial was Donovan's insistence that the centralized service should exist under the direct supervision of the President. This should be born in mind in making comparisons of this document with those which appear later.

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18 November 1944

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C.I.A.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Pursuant to your note of 31 October 1944 I have given consideration to the organization of an intelligence service for the post-war period.

In the early days of the war, when the demands upon intelligence services were mainly in and for military operations, the OSS was placed under the direction of the JCS.

Once our enemies are defeated the demand will be equally pressing for information that will aid us in solving the problems of peace.

This will require two things:

1. That intelligence control be returned to the supervision of the President.
2. The establishment of a central authority reporting directly to you, with responsibility to frame intelligence objectives and to collect and coordinate the intelligence material required by the Executive Branch in planning and carrying out national policy and strategy.

I attach in the form of a draft directive (Tab A) the means by which I think this could be realized without difficulty or loss of time. You will note that coordination and centralization are placed at the policy level but operational intelligence (that pertaining primarily to Department action) remains within the existing agencies concerned. The creation

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of a central authority thus would not conflict with or limit necessary intelligence functions within the Army, Navy, Department of State and other agencies.

In accordance with your wish, this is set up as a permanent long-range plan. But you may want to consider whether this (or part of it) should be done now, by executive or legislative action. There are common-sense reasons why you may desire to lay the keel of the ship at once.

The immediate revision and coordination of our present intelligence system would effect substantial economies and aid in the more efficient and speedy termination of the war.

Information important to the national defense, being gathered now by certain Departments and agencies, is not being used to full advantage in the war. Coordination at the strategy level would prevent waste, and avoid the present confusion that leads to waste and unnecessary duplication.

Though in the midst of war, we are also in a period of transition which, before we are aware, will take us into the tumult of rehabilitation. An adequate and orderly intelligence system will contribute to informed decisions.

We have now in the Government the trained and specialized personnel needed for the task. This talent should not be dispersed.

William J. Donovan
Director

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TAB A

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SUBSTANTIVE AUTHORITY NECESSARY
IN ESTABLISHMENT OF A
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

In order to coordinate and centralize the policies and actions of the Government relating to intelligence:

1. There is established in the Executive Office of the President a central intelligence service, to be known as the _____, at the head of which shall be a Director appointed by the President. The Director shall discharge and perform his functions and duties under the direction and supervision of the President. Subject to the approval of the President, the Director may exercise his powers, authorities and duties through such officials or agencies and in such manner as he may determine.
2. There is established in the _____ an Advisory Board consisting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, and such other members as the President may subsequently appoint. The Board shall advise and assist the Director with respect to the formulation of basic policies and plans of the _____.
3. Subject to the direction and control of the President, and with any necessary advice and assistance from the other Departments and agencies of the Government, the _____ shall perform the following

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functions and duties:

- (a) Coordination of the functions of all intelligence agencies of the Government, and the establishment of such policies and objectives as will assure the integration of national intelligence efforts;
- (b) Collection either directly or through existing Government Departments and agencies, of pertinent information, including military, economic, political and scientific, concerning the capabilities, intentions and activities of foreign nations, with particular reference to the effect such matters may have upon the national security, policies and interests of the United States;
- (c) Final evaluation, synthesis and dissemination within the Government of the intelligence required to enable the Government to determine policies with respect to national planning and security in peace and war, and the advancement of broad national policy;
- (d) Procurement, training and supervision of its intelligence personnel;
- (e) Subversive operations abroad;
- (f) Determination of policies for and coordination of facilities essential to the collection of information under subparagraph "(b)" hereof; and

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(g) Such other functions and duties relating to intelligence as the President from time to time may direct.

4. The _____ shall have no police or law-enforcement functions, either at home or abroad.

5. Subject to Paragraph 3 hereof, existing intelligence agencies within the Government shall collect, evaluate, synthesize and disseminate departmental operating intelligence, herein defined as intelligence required by such agencies in the actual performance of their functions and duties.

6. The Director shall be authorized to call upon Departments and agencies of the Government to furnish appropriate specialists for such supervisory and functional positions within the _____ as may be required.

7. All Government Departments and agencies shall make available to the Director such intelligence material as the Director, with the approval of the President, from time to time may request.

8. The _____ shall operate under an independent budget.

9. In time of war or unlimited national emergency, all programs of the _____ in areas of actual or projected military operations shall be coordinated with

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military plans and shall be subject to the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Parts of such programs which are to be executed in a theater of military operations shall be subject to the control of the Theater Commander.

10. Within the limits of such funds as may be made available to the _____, the Director may employ necessary personnel and make provision for necessary supplies, facilities and services. The Director shall be assigned, upon the approval of the President, such military and naval personnel as may be required in the performance of the functions and duties of the _____. The Director may provide for the internal organization and management of the _____ in such manner as he may determine.

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Principles - The Soundness Of Which It Is Believed Has
Been Established By Our Own Experience And A First-Hand
Study Of The Systems Of Other Nations - Which Should
Govern The Establishment Of A Centralized United States
Foreign Intelligence System.

The formulation of national policy both in its political and military aspects is influenced and determined by knowledge (or ignorance) of the aims, capabilities, intentions and policies of other nations.

All major powers except the United States have had for a long time past permanent worldwide intelligence services, reporting directly to the highest echelons of their Governments. Prior to the present war, the United States had no foreign secret intelligence service. It never had had and does not now have a coordinated intelligence system.

The defects and dangers of this situation have been generally recognized. Adherence to the following would remedy this defect in peace as well as war so

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that American policy could be based upon information obtained through its own sources on foreign intentions, capabilities and developments as seen and interpreted by Americans.

1. That each Department of Government should have its own intelligence bureau for the collection and processing of such informational material as it finds necessary in the actual performance of its functions and duties. Such a bureau should be under the sole control of the Department head and should not be encroached upon or impaired by the functions granted any other Governmental intelligence agency. Because secret intelligence covers all fields and because of possible embarrassment, no executive department should be permitted to engage in secret intelligence but in a proper case call upon the central agency for service.

2. That in addition to the intelligence unit for each Department there should be established a national

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centralized foreign intelligence agency which should have the authority:

- A. To serve all departments of the Government.
 - B. To procure and obtain political, economic, psychological, sociological, military and other information which may bear upon the national interest and which has been collected by the different Governmental Departments or agencies.
 - C. To collect when necessary supplemental information either at its own instance or at the request of any Governmental Department by open or secret means from other and various sources.
 - D. To integrate, analyze, process and disseminate, to authorized Governmental agencies and officials, intelligence in the form of strategic interpretive studies.
3. That such an agency should be prohibited from carrying on clandestine activities within the United

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States and should be forbidden the exercise of any police functions either at home or abroad.

4. That since the nature of its work requires it to have status it should be independent of any Department of the Government (since it is obliged to serve all and must be free of the natural bias of an operating Department). It should be under a Director, appointed by the President, and be administered under Presidential direction, or in the event of a General Manager being appointed, should be established in the Executive Office of the President, under his direction.

5. That subject to the approval of the President or the General Manager, the policy of such a service should be determined by the Director with the advice and assistance of a Board on which the Secretaries of State, War, Navy and Treasury should be represented.

6. That this agency, as the sole agency for secret intelligence, should be authorized, in the foreign field only, to carry on services such as

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espionage, counter-espionage and those special operations (including morale and psychological) designed to anticipate and counter any attempted penetration and subversion of our national security by enemy action.

7. That such a service should have an independent budget granted directly by the Congress.

8. That it should be authorized to have its own system of codes and should be furnished facilities by Departments of Government proper and necessary for the performance of its duties.

9. That such a service should include in its staff specialists (within Governmental Departments, civil and military, and in private life) professionally trained in analysis of information and possessing a high degree of linguistic, regional or functional competence, to analyze, coordinate and evaluate incoming information, to make special intelligence reports, and to provide guidance for the collecting branches of the agency.

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10. That in time of war or unlimited national emergency, all programs of such agency in areas of actual and projected military operations shall be coordinated with military plans, and shall be subject to the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or if there be a consolidation of the armed services, under the supreme commander. Parts of such programs which are to be executed in the theater of military operations shall be subject to control of the military commander.

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Extract from "Independent Offices Appropriation
Act, 1945."

"SEC. 213. After January 1, 1945, no part of any appropriation or fund made available by this or any other Act shall be allotted or made available to, or used to pay the expenses of, any agency or instrumentality including those established by Executive order after such agency or instrumentality has been in existence for more than one year, if the Congress has not appropriated any money specifically for such agency or instrumentality or specifically authorized the expenditure of funds by it. For the purposes of this section, any agency or instrumentality including those established by Executive order shall be deemed to have been in existence during the existence of any other agency or instrumentality, established by a prior Executive order, if the principal functions of both of such agencies or instrumentalities are substantially the same or similar. When any agency or instrumentality is or has been prevented from using appropriations by reason of this section, no part of any appropriation or fund made available by this or any other Act shall be used to pay the expenses of the performance by any other agency or instrumentality of functions which are substantially the same as or similar to the principal functions of the agency or instrumentality so prevented from using appropriations, unless the Congress has specifically authorized the expenditure of funds for performing such functions."